

Amṛta Vārtā



VOL II

JULY, 1995

NO. 3

ENGLISH

SHREE SHREE ANANDAMAYEE SANGHA

* Branch Ashrams *

1. AGARPARA : Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
P.O. Kamarhati, Calcutta-700 058 (Tel : 5531208)
2. AGARTALA : Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
Palace Compound, P.O. Agartala-799 001. (West Tripura)
3. ALMORA : Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
Patal Devi, P.O. Almora-263 602 (U.P.) (Tel : 23313)
4. ALMORA : Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
P.O. Dhaul-China, Almora-263 881 (U.P.)
5. BHIMPURA : Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
Bhimpura, P.O. Chandod, Baroda-391 105
6. BHOPAL : Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
P.O. Bairagarh, Bhopal-462030 (M.P.)
7. DEHRADUN : Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
Kishenpur, P.O. Rajpur, Dehradun-248 009
(U.P.) (Phone : Rajpur 842271)
8. DEHRADUN : Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
Kalyanvan, 176, Rajpur Road, P.O. Rajpur,
Dehradun-248 009 (U.P.)
9. DEHRADUN : Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
P.O. Rajpur Ordnance Factory, Dehradun-248 010
10. DEHRADUN : Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
47/A Jakhan, P.O. Rajpur, Dehradun (U.P.)
11. JAMSHEDPUR : Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
Near Bhatia Park, Kadma, Jamshedpur-831 005 (Bihar)
12. KANKHAL : Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
P.O. Kankhal, Hardwar-249 408 (U.P.) (Tel : 426575)
13. KEDARNATH : Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram, Near Himlok,
P.O. Kedarnath, Chamoli-246 445 (U.P.)

[Contd. to next cover page]

AMRITA VARTA

A quarterly journal dealing mainly
with the divine life and sayings of
Sri Anandamayi Ma

BOARD OF EDITORS

- Brahmachari Sivananda
- Swami Bhaskarananda
- Dr. Sukdev Sinha
- Km. Bithika Mukerji
- Km. Chitra Ghosh
- Sm. Gayatri Sharma
- Km. Vasumati Mehta
- Sm. Uttara Chinubhai
- Sri Niranjanbhai Mehta
- Km. Geeta Banerjee
- Km. Guneeta

MANAGING EDITOR (Offg.)

Sri Panu Brahmachari

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION (POSTAGE FREE):

INLAND—Rs. 60/-

FOREIGN—US \$ 12/- or Rs. 350/-

SINGLE COPY—Rs. 20/-

AMRTA VĀRTĀ

General Rules

The journal is published in four separate editions—Bengali-English: Hindi-English: Gujarati and purely English—in the months of January, April, July and October. The year begins from January.

The journal will mainly publish articles relating to Sri Ma. Other informative articles on religious literature and Saints and Teachers of any country or religion will also be welcome.

Writings from devotees about their own experiences, not entirely personal or private, throwing some light on Sri Ma's behavioural pattern with people who came close to her, are also specially invited.

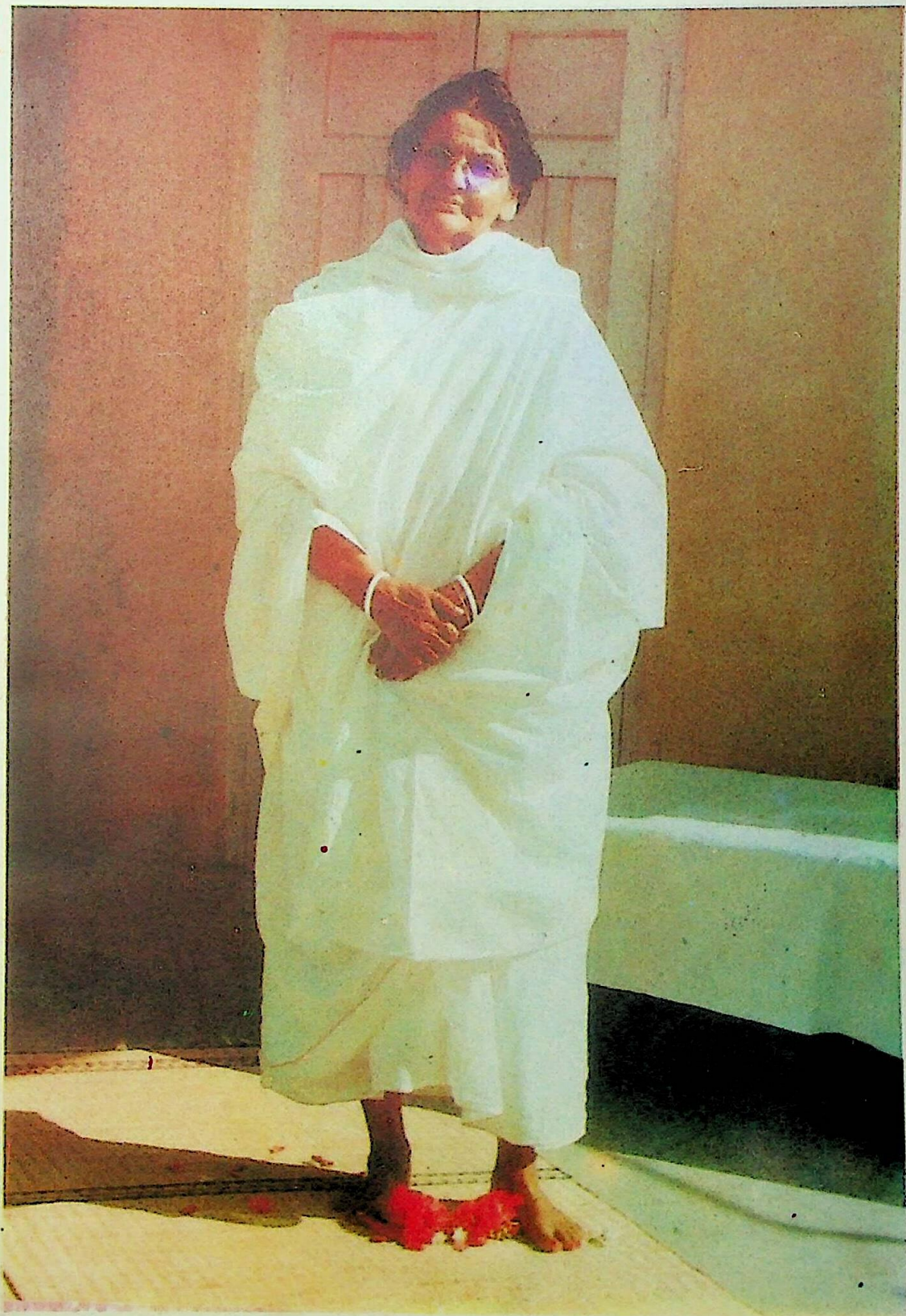
All articles must be clearly written, preferably typed, on one side of the sheet only and sent either directly to the Managing Editor or to any one on the Editorial Board.

Subscriptions to be sent in advance either by Money Orders or through Bank Drafts drawn in favour of "Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha —Publication A/C"

All correspondence regarding the journal and subscriptions to be sent to:

**The Managing Editor, Amrita Varta
Mata Anandamayee Ashram
Bhadaini, Varanasi-221001**





CONTENTS

(ENGLISH SECTION)

1. Matri Vani	1
2. What Mother is Not —Vijayananda	3
3. Homage to Mother Anandamayee —Dr. B. N. Chakravorty	7
4. Mataji's Amara Vani	8
5. A Profile of Sublime Moments —Samir Choudhury	12
6. Pages from my Diary —Gurupriya Devi	14
7. Speak Memory —Upendra Tankha	18
8. From notes taken in Sri Ma's Presence —Kirpalji	21
9. The Bliss-Filled Mother —Lisa Lassell Hallstrom	25
10. Centenary Celebration in Kheora —Shobha	26
11. My days with Sri Ma —Bithika Mukerji	28
12. Centenary Celebration Functions	31



CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Page 1

1. Introduction

2. Objectives

3. Scope of the Study

4. Methodology

5. Results and Discussion

6. Conclusion

7. References

8. Appendix

9. Glossary

10. Index

11. List of Figures

12. List of Tables

13. Acknowledgements

14. Curriculum Vitae

15. Certificate

16. Declaration

17. Certificate of Approval

18. Certificate of Completion

MATRI-VANI

There is one unchanging indivisible "Reality" which, though unmanifest, reveals Itself in infinite multiplicity and diversity.

* * *

That one, the Supreme Truth, is ever present everywhere in all circumstances.

* * *

Referred to as *Brahman*. He is no other than God Almighty.

* * *

God Almighty is nameless and formless; yet all names and forms are His.

* * *

He is the Father, Mother, *Guru*, Friend, Creator, Preserver, Destroyer-everything.

* * *

His essence is Being, Consciousness and Bliss.

* * *

Indeed, He is in everything and everything is in Him; there is nothing but Him.

* * *

Try to see God in everything and in everybody, including yourself.

* * *

God Himself is revealed in some guise even in individuals supposed to be sinners, as also in suffering seemingly unbearable.

* * *

The vision of the Eternal *lila* of the supreme Being is impossible unless one has seen His universality and self-sufficiency and unless one finds this repeated in one in union with, and as part of, the whole.

* * *

The immutable *Brahman* and the primeval *AUM* are one the same as (the word) *Ma*.

* * *

AMṚTVĀRTĀ

God's name is He himself-the Name and Named are identical.

* * *

Refuge has to be sought in His name in order to realize Him Whose Name is invoked.

* * *

At every breath try to be in communion with Him through His name.

* * *

If the Name that appeals most to you is constantly repeated, you will realize that all names are His Names, all forms are His forms.

* * *

Since all names are His indeed, He will let Himself be grasped by any one of them; furthermore, it will be gradually revealed that He is also without name and without form.

* * *

Whether with full awareness or in ignorance, whether willingly or unwillingly, whether with faith or in doubt, if God's name is adhered to, and His image in the mind is sustained, gradually what is to be burnt will burn and what is to be melted will melt.

* * *

The nature of fire is to convert everything into itself. Similarly, association with His Name inevitably enables one to be identified with Him.

* * *

Take it from me- repetition of His Name makes everything possible.

* * *

If you live with the conviction that God is in the closest contact with you, you will gradually discover that there is nothing but God.

* * *

If at all your "I" remains, let it exist only as His servant or as His child and, therefore, the notion that He is far removed will be ruled out.



WHAT MOTHER IS NOT (II)

—VIJAYANANDA

Is Mother a Great Bhakta ?

I have seen it in the writing by authoritative hand that Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma is a great bhakta. Before coming to India I myself was under the impression that Mother was advocating *bhakti marga* (the path of devotion) and probably many people abroad as well as in India still hold this view. My wrong idea about Mother was based on the following facts:

1. *The bhāvas.*

I had heard and read that in Her early days a great variety of extraordinary raptures and divine ecstasies had been observed in Mother, especially when She listened to devotional music. But nowadays things have evidently changed. For the last nine years I have been with Mother, yet have never once witnessed any state of this kind. Those who live near Mother cannot help marvelling at Her wonderful poise and balance, which is quite unshakable. Behind the superficial emotions that are but a momentary identification with the people who happen to approach Her, She is ever in a state of undisturbed, profound joy and peace, far beyond emotion. Sometimes while singing *kirtan*, Her features seem to express deep religious feeling; but no sooner has She stopped singing, in the twinkle of an eye, She resumes Her calm and serene countenance. Evidently She has merely played with the religious emotion, perhaps to give an example to devotional people.

As regards the *bhāvas* of Her early life, I suppose they occurred in response to the expectations and desires of the devotees of those days and were nothing more than a play on the surface. Mother can often be heard to say that She has ever been the same since Her infancy, notwithstanding all the apparent outer changes. As the pure crystal takes on the colour and reflects the object placed before it without actually undergoing any change itself, so Mother appears to be different according to Her surroundings.

AMṚTVĀRTĀ

2. *The Kirtans.*

Mother greatly encourages the singing of devotional music. *Kirtan* before sunrise and after sunset forms part of the daily programme of the *as'rams*. Wherever Mother happens to be *kirtan* is performed as a rule. She Herself sings off and on, even during public gatherings.

But at the same time Mother also encourages other spiritual exercises, such as *japa*, *dhyana* (meditation), *vichara* (self-inquiry) etc. in the case of those who are able and willing to engage in those practices. For many people *kirtan* is a simple and effective method of luring the mind from worldliness to divine things through the medium of music.

3. *The Devotees.*

Quite a lot of the people close to Mother are of the devotional type. *Bhakti marga*, being the easiest path, is followed by the majority of aspirants. But among Mother's devotees all other types of *sadhakas* are also to be found, namely those whose approach is by *karma*, *yoga* or *jñāna marga*, etc.

Without a doubt Mother teaches the highest truth as found in the *Upaniṣads*.

"This body" * presents the matter from the standpoint of the *Risis* and *Munis*, from the line of approach that they choose." (Anand Varta, Vol. V/3, p. 205).

But Mother does not belong to any sect, creed or school of thought. The 'Real' which She embodies and teaches is THAT from which all things emerge and in which they are rooted; but "THAT" itself is beyond caste and creed, beyond religion and philosophy. It cannot be described in words, nor measured by the mind in terms of name and form. However, for the *sādhaka*, the individual on the path, a line of approach through the channel of the mind is necessary.

Says Mother:

"The fact seekers after Truth are made each in a particular way, different from others as well as from one another, but in any case they have to pass through the gate of Truth."

(Ananda Varta Vol. V/3, p. 204)

* . Mataji's way of referring to Herself.

WHAT MOTHER IS NOT

and "When discussing creeds and paths one has to remember that it is only while on the way that one speaks of various paths....."

"But where there is no question of any doctrine nor of controversy, there is He at the root—He who is present in all these innumerable guises".

(Ananda Varta, Vo, V/3, p. 205)

Mother's Universality

The seers, saints and *yogis* who attained to Self-realization have almost all followed a definite line of approach. After becoming spiritual preceptors they lead their disciples along the path they have themselves trodden, although it is true that some of them are able to guide aspirants by a few other lines of *sādhana* as well. But most of them prescribe a definite method by which Truth will be apprehended, as for example Self-inquiry, or *japa*, or self-surrender and so on. The consequence of adhering to one particular line of approach in preference to all the others is that only aspirants of a special type are able to get the benefit of such a *Guru's* guidance. But the divine power that manifests through Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi is characterized by an extraordinary integrality and versatility as regards the knowledge of spiritual practices. It seems quite unfathomable that a being should exist to whom no path of *sādhana* is unknown.

In Her early life, during a period of about six years, Mother played the role of a *sadhika*. It was nothing more than a play, for Mother had never been in ignorance or bondage.

"Let me tell you that what I am I have been from my infancy. But when the different stages of *sadhana* were being manifested through this body there was something like a superimposition of *ajñāna*.^{*} But what sort of *ajñāna* was that? It was really *jñāna* ^{**} masquerading as *ajñāna*".

(Mother as Seen by Her Devotees, p. 143)

As a rule it takes a whole life or sometimes several lives to master one line of *sādhana*. But Mother in the short span of six years traversed untold spiritual paths with all their stages and states up to perfection. Every avenue leading to Truth has

*. Ignorance of the true nature of the Self.

**. Knowledge of the Self.

AMṚTVĀRTĀ

been explored and mastered by Her. Some of those *sādhana*s are extremely difficult and perilous. Only exceptionally gifted and bold aspirants are able to use them. The few who succeed reach only after long and strenuous efforts and after a great many ups and downs, whereas Mother accomplished all these practices without the least strain or exertion, just as a matter of play and in an incredibly short spell of time.

The following utterances of Mother about this topic are quoted from Sri Amulya K. Datta's diary, translated by himself from the Bengali original:

"I may tell you that this body has not followed only one particular line of *sadhana*, but has covered all the known lines. It has passed through all the different varieties of practices referred to by the sages of ancient times. This body has successfully gone through *nama sadhana*, *hatha yoga* with its various *āsana*s and through diverse other *yogas*, one after another. In order to attain to a particular stage along one of those lines of *sadhana* an ordinary individual may have to be born again and again; but in the case of this body it was a matter of a few seconds....."

"Moreover the different forms of *sādhana* that this body has been seen to practise, were not meant for this body, they were meant for you all....."

"When you relate your spiritual experiences to me, I often say that this body has had those experiences and this is why it knows what they are. Not only that: if anyone discloses to this body a special line of *sadhana*, it can describe in minute details the various stages of that very line."

HOMAGE TO MOTHER ANANDAMAYEE

—DR. B.N. CHAKRAVORTY

God comes to this world in the form of human being either in the person of a man or woman to save humanity from crisis. That divine manifestation is revealed through the medium of human being from time to time to give succour to the distressed humanity. Mother is such a manifestation of divine being born in this earth to the rescue of afflicted humanity.

Mother Anandamoyee was born in a tiny village of East Bengal as was the case of mother Sarada Devi who was also born in a tiny hamlet of the Dist. Hooghly. Since her early life mother Anandamoyee was blessed with extraordinary spiritual power. Even her husband was impressed by her such divine power. Her omnipotent and omniscient spiritual power expressed in her exalted divine motherhood attracted people all over the world irrespective of caste and creed to receive her blessing which she gave abundantly when asked for.

Mother has had innumerable devotees starting from our illustrious ex Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi and her mother to common ordinary people who had the opportunity of receiving her kind blessings.

Mother's unbelievable and rare spiritual power, replete with various stories, are too many to be mentioned in this short article. One patient of mine suffering from Dissecting Aneurysm of Aorta, an incurable disease, was cured by her blessing and kindness which is only possible through divine power.

Even to-day when we go to her Kankhal Ashram and sit near her Samadhi ground, we still feel her unseen divine presence and are enthralled by her numerous divine plays enacted there. Her unseen presence has an enchantment to all visitors there.

At the time when Her Birth Centenary is being celebrated throughout the country, I pay my humble and respectful homage, along with her million and million devotees in this country and abroad, to her divine self and pray let her blessings be bestowed to all her devotees at a time when our country is passing through unprecedented calamities and tribulations.

MATAJI'S AMARA VANI

*When the Bhagavata Saptaha, ** held in September 1948 at Solan, was over Raja Durga Singhji of Solan asked:

Has the person for whose sake the *Bhagavata* was read, really benefited by it ?

Mataji: Yes certainly. You see, whatever anyone does, be it good or bad, is supposed to affect fourteen generations, namely back to the seventh generation of his ancestors and down to the seventh generation of his descendants. For there is a saying that fourteen generations of the relatives of an evildoer (seven of the past and seven of the future) will have to suffer in lower states of existence as a result of his misdeeds; on the other hand if one person attains to perfection fourteen generations of his family will thereby be saved.

Although nowadays so much money is squandered on pleasures and amusements, yet should anyone spend any on a religious function such as we have just witnessed, people call it a sheer waste of money.

All the same a great number of refugees had to flee from the Punjab leaving millions of rupees behind—and why ? Because this was destined to happen. A combination of various factors brought it about. When circumstances co-operate there is no knowing who may come from where and in what manner to be present at a particular function. At the *Bhagavata Saptaha* those who were meant to come did attend and each derived whatever profit he was entitled to. It is a case of various causes intermingling. All that occurs, good or bad,—if it was predestined to happen—comes about through the mysterious working together of certain forces.

Question: How do those forces operate ? Do they cause the beginning of one's actions or their completion ?

Mataji: For one thing there is eternal relationship among all that exists. Secondly when there is a want it may be satisfied to some extent by the uniting of certain factors. Then again by a specific concurrence of factors something new may begun; Creation, Preservation and Dissolution continue ever side by side. Some part may be brought to a finish and another part started anew. In the one case

* *Bhagavata Saptaha* denotes the ceremonial chanting in Sanskrit and the explanation in the vernacular of the whole of the *Srimad Bhagavata* in seven days. This is usually arranged by the relatives of someone who recently passed away for the purpose of helping the deceased person on his or her upward path.

MATAJI'S AMAR VANI

something that was due to be obtained was obtained; in the other case what was destined to become has begun to take shape; and furthermore what is, continues to be. Besides there are certain standpoints from which beginning is immediately followed by the end—without any continuance. There are still other points of view where beginning and end coincide, where the beginning fulfils itself in a single moment.

So long as full enlightenment has not come there will be a sequence (actual or logical) of certain, preservation and dissolution. Actions are bound to be related. But why say: 'bound to be' ? The relation is simply there, is inherent in action. Nothing has ever been, is now or ever will be unrelated to anything else existing.

From the audience: All this sounds most interesting, but it does give us the personal experience of what has been said.

Mataji: By listening repeatedly to discussions and discourses on topics of this kind the path of first-hand knowledge of what has been heard, gradually opens out. Your know, it is as when water uninterruptedly dripping on a stone finally makes a hole in it, and then a flood may suddenly surge through, which will bring enlightenment.

Be it the perusal of Sacred Texts, listening to religious discourses, engaging in *Kirtan*—God must be the alpha and omega of whatever is done. When reading, read about Him, when talking, talk of Him and when singing sing His praises. These three practices are intrinsically the same—the same expressed in three different ways, because people respond differently, to suit each person's temperament and capacity for assimilation. But essentially there is only He and He alone, although everyone has his own individual path that leads to Him. What is the right path for each person depends on the degree of his maturity and on his predilection.

Take for instance the study of *Vedanta*. Some seekers become completely drowned in it. Just as others may so lose themselves in *Kirtan* as to fall into a trance. A student of *Vedanta* may become wholly absorbed in his texts, even more so than the one who gets carried away by *Kirtan*. According to one's specific line of approach one will be able to achieve full concentration through the study of a particular scripture or by some other means.

First comes listening, then reflection and last of all the translation into action of what has been heard and pondered over. This is why one has first of all to listen, so that later on each may be able to select *Vedanta* or *Kirtan* or whatever else be in his own line.

AMṚTVĀRTĀ

Have you never come across people making light of Kirtan, saying: "What is there to be gained by it ?" Nevertheless after listening to it for some length of time they actually develop a liking for it.

This is why one must listen before one can reflect and then later what has been heard and reflected upon will take shape in action. To listen to discourses on God or Truth is certainly beneficial, provided God does not let the speaker disparage or condemn those who are of another sect. To find fault with others creates obstacles for everyone all round, for him who criticizes, for him who is blamed as well as for those who listen to the criticism. Whereas what is said in a spirit of equality is fruitful to everybody. For only where there is no question of regarding anything as inferior or blameworthy (*asat*) can one speak of *Satsang*. *

Who is known as a *Vaishnava* ?** One who sees *Vishnu* everywhere. And as a *Shakta* † One who beholds the Great Mother and nothing save Her. In truth all the various creeds and philosophies spring from one source—who then is to be blamed, who to be reviled or suppressed ? All are equal in essence.

Thou art Mother, Thou art Father,
Thou art Friend and Thou art Master,
Truly thou art all in all.
Every name is Thy Name
Every quality Thy Quality,
Every form Thy Form indeed.

Yes He is also without form, pure unmanifested spirit—all depends on one's avenue of approach.

Is it not said that the great *Shiva* of the *Shaivites* * is the *Brahman* Itself ? And for those whose method is self-inquiry, everything is but the ONE SELF. In reality there is no contradiction; so long as the slightest difference is perceived—even by a hair's breadth—how can one speak of the state of Pure Being ?

* A Play upon words: *Sat* means True Being, the Good; *Satsang*, the company of the Good and also a religious gathering. *Asat*, the opposite of *Sat*, means non-being, wrong, evil. Therefore to find fault (a.a.) in a religious meeting (*Satsang*) is a contradiction in terms.

** *Vaishnava*—worshipper of *Vishnu*, the Preserver.

† *Shakta*—worshipper of *Shakti*, Divine Energy.

* *Shaivite*—worshipper of *Shiva*.

MATAJI'S AMARA VANI

For this reason no matter what path anyone may choose, it is THAT *Vedanta* ** actually means the end of difference and non-difference.

While engaging in *Sadhana* one must concentrate in a single direction, but after it has been completed, what comes then ? The cessation of difference, distinction and disagreement. Differences do indeed exist on the path. But how can there be a difference of the Goal ?

*

*

*

One evening a Punjabi lady came for Mataji's Darshan. Mataji asked her:

Mataji : Are you attending to your *Japa* regularly every day ?

Reply : I do indeed, but I cannot concentrate.

Mataji : Do not relax your efforts !

The Punjabi Lady : My children are very noisy. Even if at other times they may be quite well-behaved, no sooner have they noticed that their mother has sat down to do her *puja*, the hullabaloo starts.

Majtaji : Listen, is not the sea made up of innumerable waves, small and big ? Dive deep down in the midst of them.

The Punjabi lady : Ma, I get very angry.

Mataji : Anger is not a good thing.

The Punjabi lady : What am I to do ? I cannot help it.

Mataji : You can do one thing. On the day that you have lost your temper like this, see which is the most tasty dish on your dinner table and do not eat of it. Because you did wrong. You will remember to do this, won't you ?

Reply : Yes, Ma, I will.



** . *Vedanta*—The end or culmination of *Vedic* wisdom. Mataji here plays upon words: *Veda* and *Bheda*—difference. In Bengali the letters B and V sound alike. 'Anta'

A PROFILE OF SUBLIME MOMENTS

—SAMIR CHOUDHURY

What do you call it ? A bliss-an ecstasy ? I never know. But I perceived, as it were, an unblemished and immaculate realization, a delight untrammelled and unsurpassed MA-An Utterance, A Confidence Immediate. That was my experience when I sat at Her feet in a May evening at the Kankhal Ashram.

Let me tell you, how it happened. Dr. Roma Choudhuri, the illustrious daughter of India, informed us that Ma wanted us to perform the Sanskrit stage play "Sree Rama-Krishna Vivekananda" written by her on the holy lives of the great saints, at the Kankhal Ashram. All of us were overjoyed with such an errand. Shortly thereafter the full troupe of "Pracyavani", the institute of oriental learning, were at the Kankhal Ashram. My wife Shukla was also lucky to accompany us.

The performance commenced, I was to play the role of Swamiji. The scene was in presence of the Goddess in the Dakshineswar Temple. When I entered the stage, to my astonishment, I found Ma sitting in front. I do not know or even guess what happened thereafter. When I reiterated the famous words of Swamiji uttered to the Goddess, "*Matah, Samagra Vishva Brahmandam Tiropitam Jatm Nimesha-Madhye nama Nayana-Sanmukhat.*"

Kebalam Virajase tvam Mama Praneshu Mama Manasi Mama Atmani", (Ma, the entire world and the universe instantly disappear from my mortal eyes; It is you and only you who is omnipresent. In my life, my mind and my soul.)

I confess, it appeared to me that the Goddess and Ma (Anandamayee) resembled an eternal communion, an indivisible mingling. Again, I never know what it was. But then the incarnation was conspicuous. Tears over flowed my eyes, I fell at the feet of the cut-out of the Goddess, as if I fell at those rosy feet.

The drama was over, we were allowed to meet Ma in her room. Accompanied by Romadi we entered the room, MA Sitting on her bed, scintillating brightness encircling her periphery and her face radiating a peculiar bluish-green halo, the ones we are accustomed to visualise in Lord Krishna. And then ? I felt the lucid

A PROFILE OF SUBLIME MOMENTS

manifestation of something very dear, very affectionate, yet imbibing the deepest confidence in my existence. Her soft hand lay on my head, a smooth benign touch of "innocence incarnate".

Now I reckoned why my little palms of tender years yearned for a sweet (*batasa*-the Bengali term) which Ma threw at her devotees on the conclusion of a session of *Darshan* and song recital.

The time was evening, the place was residence of late K. C. Basu at Jadavpur, Calcutta, Ma seated on a raised platform. A song recital (possibly by Sm. Chhabi Bandopadhyaya) was in progress. A little boy was standing behind the huge gathering which had assembled in the lawn. The boy trying to peep through and understand what was going on. Soon the song offerings were over. Ma took up some sweets (*batasa*) from the platter and threw them at the devotees present. But alas ! the little boy was standing too far. There was no chance for the sweets to reach the little boy. Yet he yearned and craved for one, even without knowing who was throwing them. Many who were standing well ahead, were as unfortunate as the boy. Yet, something incredible occurred. The boy looked down suddenly to find that a sweet was lying on the ground before him.

During all my later years, till I met Ma, I could not reconcile the event with credence, but I assure you that it happened. The consistency between cause and effect is at times far too remote to guess. Isn't it ?



PAGES FROM MY DIARY

—GURUPRIYA DEVI

(Translated from Bengali)

5th June, 1959

Mataji is at present in the Kishenpur Ashram at Dehradun. Her health is not too good. The Following, although apparently an insignificant episode, is yet noteworthy. At night Mataji was lying on Her bed and Pushpa came to fan Her, but Mataji asked her not to. A little later She called her, explaining: "Someone or other is busy fanning this body." Needless to say that this referred to what was taking place on a subtle plane.

Afterwards Mataji said to me : "At times although the door is bolted and nobody in the room, yet someone is fanning this body."

6th June 1959.

At 9 p.m. when the silence was over, Mataji was talking to us. In the course of the conversation She remarked (about Herself) : "This is a tiny little child and therefore everyone loves her. One who calls nobody and nothing his own is loved by everyone and this is why all bring food and clothes for this body and lavish their affection on it."

Hiru Brahmachari put in : Why, it is Mataji Herself who attracts people !

Mataji replied laughingly : Who attracts whom and to what purpose ?

Kunjan : It almost looks as if Mataji is using a *mantra* to hypnotize people.

Mataji : In order to master such a *mantra* two things at least are necessary—a *Guru* and education; but this body has neither.

Dr. Pannalall : Mataji, you once said that none who have come to you can come to harm (spiritually).

Mataji : Perfectly right ! Nobody will come to harm, everyone will become, very good indeed, certainly, certainly, certainly !

Batuda : Ah, now we have all received Mataji's blessing.

PAGES FROM MY DIARY

Mataji : What I said is quite true. How can anyone be harmed by coming to his little daughter ? This body is Father Pannalal's doll (little girl). Is it possible for a small child to bring harm to her own father ?

Myself : Put it in any way you please—the supreme fact remains unaltered !

8th June 1959.

Mataji's health is not at all satisfactory. Today She has again a severe tooth-ache. Suddenly in the late afternoon, While in that painful condition, Her body began to manifest a variety of *yogic kriyas*. Afterwards I heard Mataji say : "The pain became concentrated in the head; you would call it a very bad symptom and it was indeed acute. How peculiar this body felt at the time ! If the *kheyal* had been there the pain might have stopped; however the *kheyal* was to let things run their own course. This body then passed through all kinds of strange conditions."

On many occasions I have watched Mataji's body go through *yogic kriyas*, even while seriously ill, and then Mataji would not be aware of the illness any longer and in fact was perfectly healthy once again.

Mataji remarked : "This body may get quite well or it may also become much worse and be gone altogether. This may occur even while laughing heartily or while weeping profusely."

12th June 1959.

Today a gentleman from Columbia in South America arrived. He had come from Delhi by taxi for a few hours in order to see Mataji and to talk to Her. He had a long private interview with Her about spiritual things and seemed deeply satisfied and impressed with Mataji's *darshan* as well as Her words. Yesterday the Ambassador of Chile with a few other foreigners came for Mataji's *darshan* on their way down from Mussoorie. They had been to visit Dalai Lama and related to Mataji about their conversation with him. They put similar questions to Her and seemed highly pleased with Her replies.

A devotee has arrived with his wife and daughter-in-law. The gentleman is *vanaprasthi** and his daughter-in-law also intends to take up the same kind of life. She seems to be in some special state; her father-in-law at least praises her a lot. He

*. The 3rd stage or *ashrama* in the life of a Hindu. The *Vanaprasthi* has abandoned his life as a householder (*grihastha*) with its manifold duties as well as its comforts, in order to devote the rest of his days entirely to the search after God or Truth.

AMṚTVĀRTĀ

says that their Guru who lives in Varanasi has on seeing her declared that her condition was a highly spiritual one. He wanted to know Mataji's opinion about this.

Mataji asked the young woman : "What do you experience while meditating ?" "At first I feel intense bliss and at the end again," She replied; "in between nothing at all."

Mataji commented to the gentleman : "This is still an elementary stage. You can understand it for yourself : as long as the ego-mind persists, there can be no *samadhi*. Nevertheless her mind and body may be said to have attained to a certain degree of stillness. then nothing at all—who is the experiencer of all this ? So long as the individual mind is active there is no *samadhi*."

After a pause Mataji continued : "Someone else also came to this body, declaring that he was no longer interested in any work or occupation, since his mind got absorbed in *samadhi* and that his *Kundalini* power had been aroused. While speaking he frequently used the words 'I' and 'mine'. He was given to understand that there could be no question of *samadhi* so long as there was 'I' and 'mine'. In real *samadhi* none of this survives. Look, a mango when ripe on a tree does not call out : 'I am ripe, come and take me'. If nobody plucks it, it falls to the ground of itself. Do you see the beauty of it ? It returns to the very place from which it has originated."

The gentleman seemed extremely pleased with what Mataji had said. She then introduced the big girls of the *Ashram* to him with the words : "They all are my friends; they come from good families and are well educated. Some have passed their M.A., B.A. or M. Sc. etc., yet renouncing everything have gathered round this body to tread this path. This body does not know how to serve anyone, all the same my friends in their kindness have great affection for this little child."

The gentleman expressed his wish to leave his daughter-in-law in Mataji's charge. She comes from a well-to-do family. At first she seemed to be full of enthusiasm, but on hearing all that Mataji had said, a change had obviously come over her.

Mataji further remarked : "It is not always possible to keep the girls with me. They live a somewhat secluded life. Even of those who are prepared to put up with all the inconveniences and hardships that travelling about with this body entails, only very few can travel. Friend, this path is very difficult. Everyone who comes has a different up bringing and a different way of looking at things. All this has to

PAGES FROM MY DIARY

be ignored. Whoever blames or reproaches one has actually contributed thereby to one's spiritual progress."

20th June 1959.

Today the gentleman left together with his wife. Mataji asked the daughter-in-law : "You won't cry at the parting, will you ?"

In the evening Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj left for Kashi. Mataji went by car to see him off at the station. The gentleman and his wife were travelling by the same train and so we met them once more on the platform. Their daughter-in-law also had come with Mataji.

On seeing her the gentleman exclaimed full of enthusiasm : "Mataji, has the girl already passed her test ? You yourself seemed doubtful as to whether she would be able to bear Ashram life."

Mataji smiled; "It is the final test that alone counts," was Her laconic reply.

22nd June 1959.

Yesterday two telegrams arrived from the girl's husband, requesting her to return home without delay. Since then she is feeling very restless. Early morning her father-in-law turned up in person to take her home. Many who had witnessed the whole incident were greatly surprised at his sudden return. But Mataji knows everything; already much earlier She had remarked, "Wait and see what will be the final outcome of it all. In the end the truth must come to light, whatever it may be. Never prevent people from having their own way."

As regards the telegrams Mataji told the gentleman : "Father, if during those three or three and a half years your son had not enjoyed his married life fully, he would not be so impatient to have his wife back."

At long last the gentleman had come to understand the meaning of all that Mataji had said. That very day he departed with his daughter-in-law.

26th June 1959.

To-night Mataji was resting while Buni massaged Her feet. Suddenly Mataji said : "This place has a very concentrated and powerful atmosphere. All of you should make a concerted effort at transformation. Become immersed in *Japa* and meditation; give your heart and soul to the remembrance, the contemplation of the ONE."

SPEAK MEMORY

—UPENDRA TANKHA.

Jai Ma

(If there be any merit in this piece, it's because of your blessings, my mother. And if there be any errors, they are owing to my short-sightedness. It's you who reveal, but sometimes we get hold of the wrong end of the stick for before you we are always children and that is how we would forever like to be).

Call me very lucky as I always had the fortune of seeing Ma. Even before my birth in 1940, my mother, Swaroop Rani, must have been calling on Ma with me in the womb. The first devotee in my family was my grandmother, called Lakshmiji and named Mahalakshmi by Ma. My grandmother used to tell me that when she first saw Ma she realised that She was everything (all in all) and she had nothing further to find.

We were indeed a lucky family as when Ma first came to Dehra Dun in around mid-thirties accompanied by Pitaji, she stayed at Manohar mandir in Anand Chowk where my sprawling ancestral house was and the temple was a four-minute walk.

Those were the days as very few people visited Ma and the very large Tankha family, occupying seven large houses nearby, could walk in in twos or threes at any hour of the day or night. Kamala Nehru was there and stayed on with Ma for days together. She was a pure soul and she would sleep alongside Ma and the two of them would eat together and take part in spiritual games in which the devotees sometimes dressed up Ma as Krishna. To set the record straight, the *rudraksha mala* which Indira Gandhi wore was given in fact by Ma to Kamalaji and passed on to her daughter on Kamalaji's early death.

Once during these early days my great great aunt, Ammaji, was stung by a bee and she visited Ma with her face all swollen up. Ammaji complained to Ma that the bee had stung her when she was getting some *prasad* ready for Her. The same night Ammaji was completely cured and Ma's face came to be swollen up. My grand father, Pandit Kashi Narain, first visited Ma at Lakshmiji's behest as he held his wife in high regard and gradually became a devotee. He personally supervised the construction of the Kishanpur ashram and had a hand in collecting funds for it besides his own contribution. When he lay dying in a Moradabad hospital, he asked for some flowers. When Ma was told of this by Lakshmiji, She said : "He was seeing This Body.

SPEAK MEMORY

Lakshmiji was of course closest to Ma. When Ma was around she would stop all her household duties and serve Ma with all her heart and even during the later years with an ailing gout-ridden body. She came to be famous for getting together all the silk and finery needed at *Bhagwatsaptahs*. Once when she was very ill in our Anand Chowk house during the month of June, Ma came and stood outside the window of the room she lay in. A devotee held an umbrella over Ma's head but Ma asked her to remove it. This was done and Ma stood in the blazing sun for five to ten minutes and then she returned to the *ashram*. Soon Lakshmiji started recovering and was restored to health.

Besides gout, Lakshmiji suffered from very high blood pressure and once complained to Ma about the state of her health. Ma said "*Sab jaldie jaldie bhog le isie janam mein. Baar baar kyon janam le.*" And Ma's wish for Lakshmiji came to pass. An unusual incident came to be witnessed at the Kalkaji Ashram in Delhi during the *Bhagwatsaptah* held for Lakshmiji. At the time of the *Krishna janma* when the conch was sounded and cymbals clashed, a *brahamcharini* heard the *pooja* bamboo stick crack. Incidentally, Krishna was Lakshmiji's *ishta*.

On the night before the morning when Lakshmiji died in a few minutes, almost painlessly, she had turned towards Ma's picture by her bedside and said : why don't you call me to you. I have suffered enough and can't take it any more.

(This was told to us by her nurse who was not a devotee).

Once when Lakshmiji arrived at the Kankhal *ashram* and people showed a reluctance to put her up in their rooms, Ma angrily said : "Lakshmi will stay with me. Put her luggage in my room." On hearing this, someone, it was Ramadi I think, obliged. (Ramadi was Virbhai's mother).

Ma thought very highly of Lakshmiji and told her once : "When you come, This Body feels good."

Pointing towards Lakshmiji, Ma had said : "This world is not a happy place. Look at Lakshmi. She has served her family with all her heart and I can see there will be a time when there will be no one to look after her." And this came to pass. for some months she was abandoned by all of us and had to stay with her brother's son at Allahabad. And I record this in great shame.

(Please note that Ma left Her body before Lakshmiji died but clearly saw incidents that would take place years after Her.)

Madhulakshmi, my aunt, was in Kuala Lumpur when her husband, Kailash Narain, a senior insurance officer, was struck by a heart attack. At that time she was completely alone as both her sons were away. The elder one, Harsha, was in the UK on a Rhodes scholarship and the younger one, Ajay, was an undergraduate in Delhi. Just then she saw Ma in a pensive mood. So for a few moments she was not alone. My uncle died of the attack and when my aunt called on Ma on her return to India, she saw Ma sitting in the same posture as she had seen her and with a

AMṚTVĀRTĀ

similar towel wrapped around her head. She was amazed. I want to point out that she is a strong minded rationalist and is not a devotee though she holds Ma in high regard. When I was in school, someone asked Ma how would I do a job when I had a severe speech impediment. Ma said I would earn my living through writing. This was prophetic as I have made a living out of writing and editing which too is all written work.

Once Lakshmiji told Ma that I was terribly unpractical. To which Ma replied that my wife would look after me. And this proved prophetic too as my wife, Kiran, is eminently practical as anybody meeting her can vouch.

I was studying at The Doon School when my thread ceremony took place at the Kishanpur *ashram* in Ma's presence. A day or so before while leaving for the *ashram*, I told someone at home that I would not like to get a tonsure. As soon as I did my *pranam* to Ma at the *ashram*, she held my hair in her hand with a firm grip and said : "All these would go." I said "Yes" and there was to be no denial and all my hair was shaven off by the barber before the ceremony.

When I was in a job with the ACC, courtesy S.N. Sopary, a devout *bhakt*, I called on Ma at the Delhi railway station. At that time I was leading an incontinent life and Ma said If you go on spending money the way you are doing you will lose your job. I did not stop and soon lost my job. In a reckless act, I resigned.

Once I told Ma that I had started drinking in the company of friends. Ma was angry, asked me to swear not to do so, saying those who drank were not my friends. I have not touched the stuff for over a decade now but whenever I broke my pledge I came to great harm as alcohol has never agreed with me. As for my drinking cronies, they don't see me now since I do not drink anymore.

One more incident : Some months ago I was being driven home from my office to my Defence Colony residence by my friend, Anita Katyal, a special correspondent with The Times of India. It was elevenish in the night and at the Lodhi Road intersection the traffic lights were amber. Our fiat crossed and was hit by a massive bus. I blacked out, was removed to AIIMS by a good samaritan (in fact, he was Deepak Vohra, the pleasant faced TV morning programme host on Doardarshan) and was found to have three broken ribs. I was in great pain and could not walk straight for weeks. I could have died in that accident. But not really. For that very morning I had paid up a sum to book a stall at the forthcoming world book fair. The stall would display and sell books on Ma and I was to organise it. And I did. And it was quite successful despite my unpractical side. A couple of devotees lent a hand along with my wife and son Madhur who did a great deal of work.

Jai Ma

FROM NOTES TAKEN IN SRI MA'S PRESENCE

—KIRPALJI

RISHIKESH-RAMNAGAR

16/04/1959

Some people had come from Pashulok near by.

Ma asked them – What do you do ?

They – We help in looking after the animals ¶ (*pashu seva*).

Ma – What have you passed and what are you studying ?

They – We are still studying and also come and work in the villages.

Ma – What kind of work do you have to do ? Do you also practice the repetition of Gods' name ?

They – We do.

Ma – Do you also sing *Kirtan* (singing of God's Holy name) ?

They – Yes, we do *Kirtan*.

Ma – You also recite God's name. It should be practised regularly daily and you should also do some meditation. you should not think that we have done the *Ramayana* Patha (reading of the *Ramayana*) and that is enough. (They were doing *Akhanda Ramayana Patha*.)

Sri Deogan : (Conservator of forests) had taken a photograph of Ma in Rishikesh 25 years ago and there was a halo of light behind Ma. He showed the same to Ma.

Ma : (laughingly) was there some defect in the processing ?

Sri Deogan : Ma did I put some special light ?

Ma : You took the photograph, you should know.

AMṚTVĀRTĀ

Sri Deogan : There was no such light from anywhere else.

Ma : Sometimes the sunlight is present—Where the sun is present—To see and not to see—It happens and it does not happen. In each and every place, and in each and every kind of way, every thing is possible. It may be Shivji's play. How it can happen. As you are a father, son and husband—none is less than the other, all three are equal, so also every thing is possible in all places. The viewpoint of a person attached to worldly matter is different. While the viewpoint of a *Jogi* (a person dedicated to spiritual practices) is different.

Another : When I was ill in Etawah and longing for Ma's *darshan* (physical presence) suddenly I saw Ma focussing a torch light on my face. It was not imagination. You were definitely present then.

Sri Deogan : Twentyfive years ago Ma stayed in Rishikesh.

Ma : Not here—at Bharat Mandir—The old *mahant* (temple head) had given accommodation for me—a straw hut—*phus ka kutia*. This body stayed there—all that you are saying happened there.

You had come there at that time and taken the photograph. At that time you were an officer dressed in a hat and coat walking in a different fashion with no time for *mahatmas*, *sadhus*, *sants* (holy men) or *satsang* (religious congregations) and no time to reflect on the spiritual realities. But engrossed in all other matters, at that time.

You were thinking Ma is not well acquainted with me. But for this body there is no one who is not well-known.

Sri Deogan : had asked Ma to go for a dip in the Ganga and Ma agreed. If Ma hadn't agreed then he wouldn't listen.

FROM NOTES TAKEN IN SRI MA'S PRESENCE

Dr. Panna Lal : In this way you keep everyone dancing at your finger tips by agreeing to even a small request.

Ma : (laughingly) Listen how he intrepets the request.

Ma (laughs) : Do I make anyone dance ? never. It is their good heartedness, their love and affection, they come to give *darshan* and turn their minds towards God. How much affection they give and here (Ma) there is nothing, not knowing *seva*. Pitaji, one makes others dance and one watches with amusement, but here there is only one and no other. Fathers, mothers and friends—there is no other, only the one.

This body does not make others dance. You alone are in all forms, the one who dances, the one who makes others dance, are all forms of the one Divine Being. You think they are seperate from you but here (this body), there is no trace of another.

Q : Ma, is there likely to be a war and will there be difficulties in *japa, dhyana* ?

Ma : Baba, (Father) don't worry about those matters, you continue with your religious practices of taking God's name and meditation. The one who has created you, you are one with him, and there is no other. What will you worry about ? Remain absorbed in the thoughts of the Divine within you, It is because you are thinking of others and that is the cause of your unhappiness. Where there are two, only then is there a fight. Yours and mine. You should remain absorbed in the thought of your own self. All fear and apprehension are due to the sense of duality. In fear there is darkness, there is only the one who is there to be afraid of. For one who is involved in the duality of the world, the state of fear is natural.

Ma : Take the case of Sree Ramchandra and Hanuman. Someone asked Hanuman what is Sree Ramchandra to you.

What did Hanuman answer – 'He is the Divine Itself. he is Perfection Incarnate. There is no other. I am part. In the worldly sense he is the Lord

AMṚTVĀRTĀ

and I am his servant, The eternal servant. He is Supreme Perfection and I am a part."

The power of fire is contained in the spark – What fire can burn, the spark can also burn.

Q. : Does God bestow his blessings (*kirpa*) ?

Ma : The blessings of God are according to the capacity to receive. When it rains, if the vessel is turned upside down the water is drained away. Turn the vessel of your mind upwards towards God and it will be filled. You have kept it turned towards outside worldly matters, and the blessings are drained away. The blessings of God are pouring down incessantly, but the vessel must be turned upward to retain the Divine nectar.

Ma walks on the verandah and hums—"Hari, the day is ebbing away and eventide has set in, carry me across the ocean"—A well known Bengali song.

THE BLISS-FILLED MOTHER

—LISA LASSELL HALLSTROM,

Ānandamayī Mā, one of the most beloved and influential of contemporary Hindu religious figures, was widely revered as a saint, *guru*, and *avatāra*, or incarnation of God, for the last sixty years of her life. She was born as Nirmalā Sundarī to a poor brahman family in East Bengal in 1896. As a child, she is said to have been ever cheerful and obedient, spending much of her time communing with animals, plants and trees. At the age of twelve she was married to a much older man, Ramani Mohan Chakravarti. However, their relationship was hardly conventional. In the early years of their marriage, Nirmalā began to withdraw more and more from everyday activities and to spend a large part of her day in states of spiritual ecstasy. By the age of thirty, Mā, as she was called by her devotees, had abandoned her *dharma*, or religious duty, as a Hindu wife, had initiated her husband into the spiritual life, and had begun her endless wanderings around India, attracting devotees wherever she went. After her husband's death in 1938, Mā continued to grow in stature as a spiritual leader, attracting such renowned devotees as Indira Gandhi. By the time in 1982, her devotees numbered in the hundreds of thousands and *āshrams*, schools and hospitals had been established in her name all over India. She, who called herself simply "this body" and had not lifted her hand to feed herself for fifty-six had become the spiritual guide and focus of reverence for countless people.

Although Ānandamayī Mā maintained that she was not a *guru*, she used every possible occasion to teach what she held to be the purpose of human life : to discover the underlying unity of all being, which can be called by many names. She implored everyone to let go of the idea, "I am separate from everything else," and empty themselves of ego and attachment. God, she said, is the only reality. She asked people to begin their spiritual practice by consecrating just ten minutes a day to God, maintaining, "The ceaseless, never-ending current of divine Mercy and Compassion ever flows forth; in that current one should bathe." Although testimonies of her devotees cite many miracles in their lives, they maintain that the greatest miracle was Mā's ability to give them the *experience* of the divine within. They describe coming into Mā's presence for the first time as a turning point in their life from materialism to spirituality, from discord to harmony, and from self-centeredness to God-centeredness.

●

CENTENARY CELEBRATION IN KHEORA

[Letter To An Ardent American Devotee of Shri Ma]

—'SHOBHA'

Jai Ma.....Shraddha di.

The pilgrimage to Kheora was strongly and intensely vibrating with Shri Ma's touch, laughter, childlike mirth and pranks and HER mood of divinity governed by HER immaculate *Kheyala*.

Heart and mind stops seeking for words to express the great joy that was felt within each devotee in this journey to reach out to Shri Ma. You yourself being the loved one of Shri Ma can revel in your within with this unspoken joy that knows no language to pour the joy felt within. Shri Ma's words in Bengali, "*Nijike janarchesta korlai; Ma ke pava jay*". By making efforts to know thy own self you can reach to Ma ! These words of wisdom of Shri Anandamayee Ma knocked me at every breath at every step of my pilgrimage to HER Abode.

Shri Anandamayee Ma's awareness of HER steady gaze and caring and loving heart made the sojourn journey of each devotee to reach great heights of accomplishment. Ma's words quoted from Sadvani by Bhaiji page 31, ".....Like from the power of kingdom one realizes the power of the king hence from the heat of the fire one knows the power of fire, in the same way this manifested world gives us the realization of the Unmanifested.....". Kheora, the beautiful abode of Ma's *abhirbhava* was vibrating intensely with the power of Shri Ma's Supreme divinity that engulfed each and every devotee into an aura of eternal love. "The ceaseless, never-ending current of divine mercy and compassion ever flows forth; in that current one should bathe". Page 3, Matri Vani, volume one. Yes, we were bathing, drenched with our Beloved's Fragrance, HER Touch, HER Creation ! ! ! !

HER childlike tiptoes danced in rhythm with the pious soil of Kheora, HER clear and loud laughter blew with the sweet breeze of the lush fields and the green trees of the heavenly abode of Kheora. Her divine fragrance could be smelt in every nodding flower, leaf and the ripples of the pond water that danced to and fro with HER Divine mirth, HER Divine songs.

CENTENARY CELEBRATION IN KHEORA

The narrow up and down path leading to HER abode brought the vision of the cows gathered in herds to get HER Touch. O' Krishna, Mother Divine for once come down from your Heavenly Abode and retouch this soil to comfort these weeping eyes that weep to be with you ! ! ! The school building in the close proximity of Ma's living abode echoed with HER rhetoric chanting of the lesson (the only one) that she had prepared for HER examination. SHE excelled the exam as the teacher tested HER on that lesson only.

The nearby pond overlooking the heavenly abode (measures are being taken to restore it with water). Lo behold who is climbing up with the fragments of the dishes that were sent by Didi Ma to be washed with the warning of, "Bring them back broken now". The Immaculate Mother knew no breaking of rules.

Each devotee held MA close very close to their heart. **Sadvani**, page 17, "ONE is manifested in many and many in ONE.....ONE is All and ALL are ONE. Verily without THAT ONE there is no ONE." Yes MA, the Immortal Durga, Kali, Shiva, Saraswati, Krishna, Katyayani, Chandi. You are the sustainer, sustain us please.

Shri Ma's *abhirbhava* Puja lulled the environment into mystic beauty, romance, mirth and joy. There was divine grace in the hustle and bustle of the preparation. The cool breeze, the green grass danced to and fro expressing their anxiety of the preparation. As for me I took great care to dress myself fair and pure to be offered with wholeheartedly to the Lotus Feet of Shri Ma.....The divine Beauty.

Ma's Puja as always was graciously done with great dignity, sophistication, beauty and keeping in mind the detailed ritualistic order was beautifully conducted by who else but Shri Ma's very own Brahmachari Shri Nirvananandaji. The Kanyapeeth Brahmacharinis headed by respected Kanti Di under the guidance of Shri Panu Brahmachari ji and Maitrayi Di, Swami Shanta Di (I hope I caught the name right ?) and Saroj Didi of Vrindaban Ashram all contributed to the graciousness of the occasion. Chanting invocations to Shri Ma. Last but not the least Shri Sw. Sacchidanandaji's quiet, demure, compassionate presence made the heart cry more and more for MA.

The solace of the grieving heart now rests in the words of Shri Ma, "They imagine this Body to be far away, but actually it is always very, very near. How could it possibly leave anyone ? The question of distance arises solely from their point of view.....". **Matri Vani**, Volume one, page 44.

Jai Ma, Jai Ma, Jai Ma. Matrisharanam



MY DAYS WITH SRI MA

—BITHIKA MUKERJI

This instalment is a continuation of the account written by my cousin Sidhudidi:

Sometime in late October 1938, Sri Ma came to our house, 31, George Town in Allahabad for the first time. Since then, right up to January 9 and 10, 1982, out of her immense *ahetuki Kṛpā*, she continued to visit our home at regular intervals. Allahabad is a Junction town for various routes. Sri Ma passed through Allahabad many times in the course of her ceaseless travels. Some time she broke her journey to stay overnight at 31, George Town, or just for the day or even a couple of hours. Before my young cousin Bindu built a small cottage for her in the compound under a *neem* tree in 1956/57 she would most graciously abide by any makeshift arrangements that could be made for her. The *punya* of our saint-like forefathers must have created an aura on our house which brought us the blessing of Sri Ma's presence so often.

Sri Ma came to Allahabad once or twice in those days, at the invitation of Sheo Prasad Sinha, an advocate, who had become a devotee. Didi's elder brother J.C. Mukherji was a friend of Mr. Sinha. On one of these visits he very kindly suggested to my mother that she could ask Sri Ma to visit her home also. My Mother was joyful at the prospect and made elaborate arrangements for the reception. A small *samiyānā* (marquee) was put up in the centre of the big lawn decorated with flower garlands. We had a profusion of *shefali* flowers. She made a carpet like pattern with these small star shaped white flowers on the green lawn. It took her almost the whole night to do this and it looked very beautiful.

It was my mother's wish that we would sing a song of welcome (*āgomoni*) when Sri Ma came to our house. Neither of us sisters was musical but we had a cousin *Mamata* staying with us who made us practice a song for the occasion. This, however, came to nothing because Kawna and myself were overcome by a fit of the giggles when the time came. Poor Mamata had to sing on her own while my mother greeted Sri Ma as she stepped on the lawn. Sri Ma sat on the seat prepared for her. My father's personal servant Perag had made a huge garland of red hibiscus flowers. Sri Ma looked truly resplendent with this garland on her neck

MY DAYS WITH SRI MA

which fell on a graceful curve on to the lawn itself. We managed to sing the song of *ārati*. while my mother performed it. Sweets and fruits were offered. Didi gave a little of it to Sri Ma, the rest being distributed among the people. My grandmother was helped to walk over to the lawn and thus she had her first *darsana* of Sri Ma. My father stood at the gate of the gardens, a little distance off and made a *namaskāra* with folded hands. Sri Ma smiled at him.

My father was a devotee of Kali. His outer image did not reflect the commitment to an inner life of *sadhana*. It occurred to us on later life that he could have seen a vision of his *Iṣṭa-devata* in Sri Ma, radiant and smiling with a garland of hibiscus (flowers sacred to Kali) almost covering her entirely. It is also possible that Sri Ma came to our house at this time to grant him this *darśana*, because he himself would not have gone anywhere to visit her and these were the last days of his unexpectedly short life.

We had *darśana* of Sri Ma off and on when she came to Allahabad and stayed on a houseboat on the Yamuna across the Ewing Christian College. She once or twice stopped over at Sheo Prasad Sinha's house also. Once, on being informed of Sri Ma's arrival at his house, we went over to find her sitting inside a tent. Till that time we had not known any restriction regarding Sri Ma's availability for *darśana*. My mother entered the tent but was told rather brusquely to wait outside till sent for. She came out immediately. This was our first experience of the thoughtlessness of Sri Ma's attendants toward visitors. We were rather taken aback and embarrassed and wanted to leave immediately. My gentle mother, although almost trembling at this experience of uncalled for rudeness displayed a fortitude which was a lesson to us. She said we would wait till Sri Ma will be free to receive us. Within a minute, however, J.C. Mukherjee came out and called us in, saying Sri Ma had sent him out to fetch my mother. Sri Ma put her hands on my mother's head and shoulders caressingly as if wiping away something. The hurt dissolved and we were as happy as ever. I write of this incident because later in life we came to realize that it was hardly the fault of the attendants who could not know about the visitors before denying them access to Sri Ma's room. Only Sri Ma knew to a nicety the needs and sensitivity of persons seeking audience and act accordingly. The next few years in my family history were difficult; without Sri Ma's constant *kheyala* and unremitting compassion we would not have survived the various ordeals as lightly as we did.

AMṚTVĀRTĀ

My father passed away on March 4, 1939 after a fortnight's illness at the age of 52. He, at that time was the leading advocate (in criminal law) of the Allahabad High Court. His wit and humour and court-room technique had made him a legend in his own life time. Allahabad was shocked at this sudden death, our family was almost brought to a standstill because my uncle, being the younger son, had never envisioned the possibility of such a responsibility descending on his shoulders almost at a moment's notice so to say. He was just stunned.

My aunt (*Renu's mother*) ever the pioneer, held everything together with courage and exemplary circumspection. She (as in every other crisis in her life) must have been sustained by Sri Ma's *kheyala* on her. She and my mother were close friends as well. More than anybody, she knew what my mother was suffering. She prevailed upon my uncle to take herself and my mother to Vindhyachala in one of the family cars to see Sri Ma who was residing there at the time. The house was full of relatives who had come to mourn our loss with us. From morning till night, friends visited us for offering condolences. Somehow my aunt managed to whisk my mother away from all this, for a few hours.

As the car climbed on the hill top, Sri Ma was seen to come out of her room and descend to the courtyard. She met my mother half-way clasping her in her arms and speaking gentle words in her own inimitable style of consoling the bereaved. My mother said (later to my aunt) that all her anguish and the fearsome burden weighing on her heart had dissolved at Sri Ma's kind touch and words. On their return from Vindhyachala, my mother seemed more self-possessed and serene. She in any case, was usually quiet and undemonstrative by nature. After things had settled down a bit we realized that my mother had lost her interest in the world completely.

We have heard many tales of sudden *vairagya* (dispassion) which leads to God realization. My mother seemed to make an easy transition from being one of the foremost ladies of the town to an almost ascetic way of life. Her friends pleaded with her not to withdraw from the world, to take an interest in the future careers of her daughters and so on. She listened to all such advice almost with a little amusement, saying calmly, "Mati (Mati Rani, my aunt, Renu's mother) is there, she will look after everybody."

In retrospect we realize that my mother just lived the *vāṇī* "To talk of God alone is worthwhile, all else is in vain and pain." Her renunciation of the world was total. She did not go away anywhere but continued to live with us and agreed to

MY DAYS WITH SRI MA

whatever plans my uncle suggested regarding our changed living conditions. She talked and laughed with us, met our visitors, spent some time with her own mother and younger brother who had come from Calcutta to be with her. She would also make an effort to tell stories to my youngest cousin Babu, a child, who was very fond of his *Lal -mamma* (beautiful mother), as he called her

All this however, was on the surface as it were. Her inner life of constant jāpa and meditation, slowly became all in all for her. My mother became very ill after about 6 months of my father's death. She must have been praying humbly for Sri Ma's *darśana* because Sri Ma did visit her a few weeks before her own death on April 5, 1940.

This incident, an answer to prayer, happened in this way: Sri Ma passed through Allahabad sometime in February, 1940. She got off from the train at Prayag station. She said to J.C. Mukherjee who had gone to receive her that she had a *kheyala* to visit Bina (my mother). J. C. Mukherjee said he was not sure if he could find the house as it was already night. Sri Ma was not dissuaded by this, but said firmly that she had some idea and would locate it herself. So around 10 p.m. there was a great knocking at the door. We heard Didi Gurupriya's voice saying "Open the door ! Sri Ma is here !" We tumbled out in great excitement and found Sri Ma sitting in car and smiling at us. My mother who was already bed-ridden was lifted on to a chair. Renu and Kawna carried her frail weight very carefully to the portico. Sri Ma descended from the car and put her arms around my mother in a loving embrace, saying "See, I have come, havn't I ? (*ayee to āmi eshechhi* !)" Then she added cheerfully, "See Bina, these people did not know where to go. I myself have directed them to your house". Then she spoke to my mother for some time while all of us stood back a little. Sri Ma then very gently bade her farewell, smiled at all of us and disappeared into the night. We were left standing as if bewitched by this sudden vision of Sri Ma. My grandmother also had been helped out on to the portico to have *darśana* of Sri Ma.

It was clear that J.C. Mukherjee had not wanted Sri Ma to come to see my mother because it is inconceivable that he did not know our house which is quite a landmark in this part of the town. He must have wanted to deflect Sri Ma's *kheyala* out of concern for her, because my mother was suffering from tuberculosis and in those days fear of this disease bordered on dread. All the same, Sri Ma came in

AMṚTVĀRTĀ

answer to the mute prayers of her devotee as is clear from her opening words. We in our ignorance seek to protect a person, who truly protects us all.

Again in retrospect, we realize that my mother made the full turning around toward renunciation which is the ideal ever held aloft by Sri Ma. She lived like a recluse in her own house. She made Renu and myself promise slowly that we would not keep away from our exams in case anything happened to her. So it transpired that both Renu and myself continued to appear at our exams (I. A. and B.A.) during the last days of her illness even to the day when she breathed her last. It must have been her spirit which sustained us. Jai Ma

[End of my cousin Sidhudi's narrative]

I am happy that I have this opportunity of paying a little tribute to my aunt Bina Pani Devi (Sidhudidi's mother). We had a very happy childhood due to my aunt and mother who were more like friends than figures of authority. My grandfather had been like a benevolent despot. His one passion in life was the pursuit of knowledge. He was well versed in Bengali, English, Sanskrit and Persian. Sanskrit and Persian were obligatory for judges because Hindu and Muslim laws were written in these languages. He had learnt Latin and French as well, in order to help his grandchildren with their school studies. He took as keen an interest in the cases argued by my uncle or judgements written by my father as in the school studies of children of all ages. He had carefully educated my aunt and my mother who had both come to 31, George Town as child-brides. They were proficient in Bengali and English as well because they had a Scottish governess (Miss Mc Hurdoch) to teach them. He was so respected in Allahabad, as a learned person of high integrity- that he was very often invited by the parents of a child to give them his First Lesson (*Vidyārambha*), which is a ritual in our tradition. My grandfather had passed away in 1936. During the two years 1939 and 1940, we lost in quick succession my uncle, aunt and grandmother who died in July of the same year.

It is entirely due to Sri Ma's *kṛpā* that my parents overcame the devastating changes which affected all our lives during the following years. Jai Ma.



CENTENARY CELEBRATION FUNCTIONS.

After many many years' wait, the Moment came at last. On 3 May, 1995, the morning sun ushered in the most auspicious Day at the blow of conch shells. The year long celebration of the Birth Centenary of Ma Anandamayee (from May, 1995 to May, 1996) was inaugurated in different parts of the world with due solemnity and grandeur. At the *Amṛta Vārtā* office, we had already received a shower of function cards, specially designed and decorated, from various Ashrams and Centres in the Holy Name of Sri Ma. Here we furnish a brief account of the programmes held in these Ashrams and Centres to inaugurate Sri Ma's *Punya Āvirbhāva Shatābdi*.

1. BANGLADESH—KHEORA

This small village in Bangladesh has the rare good fortune of being the Holy Birth place of Sri Ma. Ninety nine years back, on 30 April, 1896, the *Divya Āvirbhāva* of the one beyond birth and death, beyond coming and going, blessed this land for ever. Devotees from far and near places, including about 40 participants from India thronged here to offer obeisance to Sri Ma's holy birth place and to collect handfuls of sanctified dust from the place. A warm welcome was proffered together with all kinds of facilities by the hospitable residents of Kheora, a village of overwhelming Muslim majority.

The group from India reached Kheora on 30 April, 1995. On 1 May, after sundown, the *Adhivāsa* (initiation) of *Nāma Sankirtan* was held in the Kirtan hall at the Birth place.

On 2 May, which by chance was *Akshaya Tritiya* this year, *Nama Sankirtan* was performed from sunrise to sunset by renowned *kirtan* singers of Bangladesh. Hundreds participated in the same.

On 3 May at 11 am., the inaugural function took place at Kheora Mā Anandamayee High School. About 500 students boys and girls, dressed in the school uniform, marched round the stage. They were repeating "Jai Ma, Jai Ma" with clapping of hands. Sweets were distributed to about 1500 local children.

The programme was resumed at 5 in the evening. Hon'ble Justice B.B. Roy Chowdhury of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, was the Chief Guest. In his address to the gathering of about 500 devotees he paid a rich tribute to Sri Mā. On

AMṚTVĀRTĀ

behalf of Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha he also released the Centenary Souvenir "*Ananda Jyoti*" in Bangladesh. Br. Gita Banerjee impressed all with her engrossing talk on Mā.

The main Birth day *puja* was performed at 3 a.m. of 4th May by Br. Sri Nirvananandaji in the newly built temple of Ma at the Birth place. The *puja* was followed by *usha kirtan* and distribution of *prasad* to hundreds of village people. The entire programme was beautifully organized on behalf of the Centenary Celebration Committee by Md. Nurul Huque, Dr. Mujibul Huque, Janab Abdus Samad, Dr. Haripada Saha and Chairman of the Kheora village union. The collaboration rendered by Sri Pinaki Bhattacharya of Brahmanbaria deserves a special mention.

2. SIDDHESHWARI, DHAKA

This is the very place where Sri Mā came about eighty years ago. The Siddheshwari Kali Temple, ancient and dilapidated, began pulsating with a new life and acquired a new dimension of importance on Sri Mā's arrival.

On 2 May, 1995, *Akshaya Tritiya*, special *Puja* was offered to Sri Mā in Mā Anandamayee Ashram, Siddheshwari, which happens to be the first Ashram of Ma in this whole sub-continent.

On 4th May, at the small hours before sunrise Sri Mā's *puja* was performed at the holy spot, which was identified by Sri Mā as of special spiritual importance some seventy years ago, and where Bhajji first hailed Her as "Ma Anandamayee". *Puja* was offered to the Shivalingam installed on the *vedi* (platform) erected on the holy ground. Both the *pujas* were done by Sri Bholanath Bhattacharya of Varanasi.

On 6th May morning a huge procession was taken out from Ramna near Shahbagh to the Siddheshwari Kali Temple. The procession was joined by numerous citizens of Bangladesh and devotees from outside, of all creeds and communities.

At 6 p.m. on the same day a special commemoration Seminar was held, presided over by Hon'ble Justice Sri Debesh Chandra Bhattacharya. Swami Aksharananda Maharaj, President, Ramakrishna Mission, Dhaka was the Chief Guest. The Special Guest was Sri Shuddhananda Mahathero, President, Bangladesh Buddhist Mission. The welcome address was delivered by Sri R.N. Dutta Gupta. Other eminent participants were Prof Aminul Islam, Sri K.B. Roy Choudhury, Prof. P.C. Mandal, Sri Priyabrata Brahmachari, President. Prabhu Jagadbandhu Mahaprakash Math, Sri Shibshankar Chakravarty, President,

CENTENARY CELEBRATION FUNCTIONS

Bangladesh Jatiya Hindu Samaj Samiti, Sri Sudhansu Sekhar Haldar, M.P., Prof. Dilip Kumar Bhattacharya, Chairman, Dept. of Sanskrit and Pali, Dhaka University, Dr. Jaya Sen Gupta and many others. Br. Gita Banerjee also took part in the discussion on behalf of our Ashram. Sri Jayanta Bhowmik proposed a vote of thanks. An attractive cultural function was held in the evening at 7.30 p.m.

It has been decided that each month throughout the Centenary year, a special Centenary Celebration Programme shall be held in different parts of Bangladesh.

3. DELHI

The Birth Centenary inaugural function was held in the capital at the Siri Fort auditorium on 3rd May, 1995. The spacious stage in the auditorium had a huge photograph of Sri Mā at the centre. Near the entrance photographs and words of Sri Ma were on display. The Hon'ble President of India, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma could not be present at the function.

Among the illustrious saints present at the function were 1008 Swami Sri Vidyanandaji Maharaj, Mahamandaleshwar of Kailash Ashram, Rishikesh, 108 Swami Sri Giridhar Narayan Puriji, Mahant of the Nirvani Akhara, Kankhal, Sri 1008 Swami Vivekananda Saraswatiji of Sri Naradananda Ashram, Naimisharanya, Sri 1008 Swami Santosh Puriji (Sm. Gita Bharatiji), and Sri 1008 Swami Nirananandaji. The other dignitaries present were Smt. Rajendra Kumari Bajpai, Lt. Governor of Pondicherry, Sri P.K. Dave, Lt. Governor of Delhi, H.H. Kashi Naresh Dr. Vibhuti Narain Singhji and many others.

Dr. Mandan Mishra was the principal coordinator of the function

At 5 p.m., the inaugural function was commenced with Vedic chant by a group of Brahmacharinis from Ma Anandamayee Kanyapeeth, Varanasi. Sri Swami Vidyanandaji formally inaugurated the Centenary Year by lighting the Centenary Lamp. Five girls blew conch shells to mark the auspicious moment. The General Secretary of the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha, Swami Swarupananda Giri, welcomed the honoured guests. He was assisted by Dr. D.P. Mukhopadhyaya, Secretary, Centenary Celebration Committee, and the Treasurer, Sri S.K. Dutta.

The Vice President of the Sangha, Sri Govind Narainji, delivered the welcome address. After this eminent speakers delivered speeches on various aspects of Sri Mā's personality, life, and teaching.

The function was concluded with the release of the Centenary Souvenir, "Ananda Jyoti" and the pictorial biography "Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee" through the hands of Sri Swami Vidyanandaji.

AMṚTVĀRTĀ

4. AGARPARA, CALCUTTA

At Ma Anandamayee Ashram, Agarpara, Calcutta, the inaugural function was held from 11th to 19th May, 1995 with magnificence and solemnity.

The inauguration function began at 11 a.m. on 11th. Hon'ble Justice K.C. Agrawal, the Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court adorned the President's chair. H. E. Sri Satyanarain Reddy, Governor, Orissa, was the Chief Guest. The function was attended by several other celebrities.

Among the venerable Mahatmas who graced the occasion with their hallowing presence and delivered enlightening discourses there were Sri 1008 Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, President, Divine Life Society, Rishikesh, who had just arrived from Japan for this particular occasion, Sri 1008 Swami Vidyanandaji, Sri 108 Giridhar Narayan Puriji; Sri 1008 Swami Brahmanandaji Maharaj from Hardwar, Sri 1008 Swami Niranjananandaji from Jalandhar and Sri 1008 Swami Nityanandaji from Bombay.

Famous musicians presented enchanting vocal and instrumental music in the evening daily from 8 P.M. to 10 P.M. Sri V. G. Jog, Smt. Girija Devi, Sri Purna Das Baul, Sri Dwijen Mukherjee, Sri Ram Kumar Chatterjee, Gita Shree Chhabhi Banerjee and many other top rank artistes enthralled the audience with their performance.

On 14th May the holy *tithi* of Buddha Purnima, a special meditation temple "Ananda Dhyana Peeth", was inaugurated in the Ashram. An extraordinary feature of this meditation temple is the graceful marble image of Sri Ma installed upon a beautiful marble lotus. Full credit goes to Sri Pratibha Kumar Kundu of Calcutta for the planning and construction of this new exquisite structure.

The *Tithi Puja* of Sri Ma was performed in the night of 17-18th May, the *Maha Avirbhava* day at 3 a.m.

The entire programees were well organized by Swami Nirmalananda Giri, Sri Pratibha Kundu; Sri Anil Dewanji, Sri Sunil Majumdar, Sri Sailen Ghosh and others.

6. LUCKNOW

On 25th May, 1995, at 7- P. M. the inauguration of Sri Ma's Birth Centenary year was celebrated in the central lawn of the Raj Bhavan, Lucknow under the

CENTENARY CELEBRATION FUNCTIONS

auspices of the State Centenary Celebration Committee of which the Chief Patron is H. E. Sri Motilal Vora, Governor, U.P. The function was presided over by Padmashree Rani Leela Ram Kumar Bhargava and attended by many dignitaries, like Sri. R. K. Trivedi, ex-Governor, Gujarat, Justice A Banerjee, Ex-Chief Justice, Allahabad High Court and a host of others. Br. Gita Banerjee delivered an impressive speech on Ma on this occasion. The function was concluded with exquisite vocal music presented by the famous artiste Smt. Vani Jairam.

6. KANKHAL, HARDWAR

At the "Ananda Jyoti Peetham", Sri Ma's 100th Birth day celebration was celebrated through numerous functions, such as *Kirtan*, *Akhanda Japa*, *Kumari Puja*, recitation of Gita and Durga Saptasati, culminating in *Tithi Puja* during the night of 17-18th May at 3 a. m.

7. VARANASI

The Centenary year was formally inaugurated at Ma Anandamayee Ashram, Varanasi on 7th May, 95. Maharaja Dr. Vibhuti Narain Singhji presided over the function. One hundred lamps were lighted in the temple of Sri Ma, "Ananda Jyoti Mandir". The celebrities present at the function were Prof.V. Venkatachalam, Vice-Chancellor, Sampurnananda Sanskrit University, Sri Din Dayal Jalanji, Dr. P.N. Somani, Dr. V. Thakur and others. Maharaja Benares said that the centenary celebrations will be really successful if we can inculcate the idea firmly in our hearts that we belong to Ma, that Ma is our own, and if we can call out to her, saying "Ma, Ma" with childlike simplicity and faith.

8. MIRZAPUR

Sri Ma's devotees at Mirzapur also observed the Centenary celebration on 3rd May, 95 at Goenka Nivas, Gosain Tola. There were religious discourses, *Kirtan*, *Bhajan*, etc. Ceremonies were also held in Ma's Ashram at Vindhyachal.

9. RANCHI (BIHAR)

In Ma Anandamayee Ashram, Ranchi, Ma's Centenary inaugural function was held from 3rd to 18th May, 95 through a series of programmes. On 3rd May special *Puja* was offered to the deities at all the local temples. *Chandipath* was performed from 3rd to 17th May. On 6th May fruits and sweets were distributed among the

AMṚTVĀRTĀ

patients of the Ranchi Sadar Hospital. Feeding of the poor, Daridra Narayan seva, took place on 17th May. Devotees participated in *akhanda japa* from sunrise to hours past midnight till the *Janma muhurta* at 3 a.m., 18th May. At noon *prasad* was distributed to all present.

10. AGARTALA (TRIPURA)

The Tripura State Centenary Celebrations Committee under the Chief Patronship of H.E. Romesh Bhandari, Governor of Tripura, held the inaugural function from 3 to 18th May. The celebration began with special *Puja* offering at the famous temple of Sri Tripura Sundari Devi at Udaipur. Subsequently special *pujas* were also offered at the famous Kasba Kali Mandir. Special *satsang*, *pravachan* and *Kumari puja* were among the other programmes. Eminent artistes presented musical programmes in the evening session.

The entire programme from 3rd to 18th May were very well conducted through the combined efforts of Sri Krishnadas Bhattacharya, ex-Revenue Minister, Tripura, President, State Centenary Committee, Dr. Sumangal Sen, Secretary, Sri Kumud Saha, Vice-President and Sri Banibrata Saha, Treasurer.

11. ASSAM

Sri Sri Ma's Birth Centenary function also took place in Assam from 3rd to 18th May, 95. Special *Puja* was first of all offered to Sri Sri Kamakhsya Devi at the famous Kamakhsya Temple in Gauhati. *Kumari puja* and special *bhog* were also performed. The main programme took place in Ma Anandamayee Ashram, Dibrugarh. *Akhanda kirtan* was held in which famous *kirtan* singers of North Bengal took part. The other programmes were 1008 *Chandi Path*, *Akhanda japa*, *Daridra Narayan Seva* and distribution of sweets and medicines to patients at the local hospital.

12. BHOPAL

On 3rd May, 95 in the evening hours Sri Ma's Birth centenary was inaugurated at Ma Anandamayee Ashram, Bairagarh by H.E. M. Shafi Qureshi, Governor of M. P. In his inaugural address he exclaimed "Ma Anandamayee has shown us the true path, which we have forgotten. The fragrance which we receive simply by sitting at Her Holy Feet gives fulfilment to our life." He added that the words of Sri Ma should be translated in all languages. The Governor expressed the hope that all

CENTENARY CELEBRATION FUNCTIONS

who come here would go with the message of peace and selfless service. Other dignitaries present were Sri Tanwant Singh Kir, Minister, Sri Babulal Gaur, Ex-Minister, Sri Prafulla Maheshwari, Editor, "Nava Bharat", and Sri Uma Shankar Gupta, Mayor.

Other important programmes were : *Akhanda Guru Granth Sahib Path* from 12th to 14th May, 95, Food served to about 200 children of the local slums on 5th May; *Kumari Puja* of 108 *Kumaris* on 14th May. During the night of 17-18th May, the *Tithi Puja* was performed and *prasad* was distributed in the morning.

13. ASSISI, ITALY

At Sri Ma's Temple at the Sadhana Ashram, Assisi, Italy, also Ma's Centenary was well celebrated by the founder of the Ashram, Sri Satyanandaji and his followers.

On behalf of the Sangha, we take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation and sincere thanks to all the organizers, participants and donors who have made Sri Ma's holy Centenary Celebration inaugural functions a great success at various places of India and abroad.

May Sri Sri Ma's choicest blessings shower on them all'. Jai Ma !

We earnestly request the organisers of all Centenary Celebration programmes all over the country and even abroad to send periodical reports of all programmes at the under mentioned address for the benefit of hundreds of devotees and admirers of our Divine Mother :

The Managing Editor,
'AMRITA VARTA'
Mata Anandamayee Ashram
Bhadaini,
Varanasi-221001

SHREE SHREE ANANDAMAYEE SANGHA

H. O.: KANKHAL, HARDWAR-249408

NEW PUBLICATIONS

It is a matter of tremendous satisfaction to all concerned that on the momentous occasion of Sri Sri Ma's birth centenary celebrations Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha has been successful in bringing out a few notable publications on Ma in different languages, which are now available for sale from different Branch Ashrams of the Sangha.

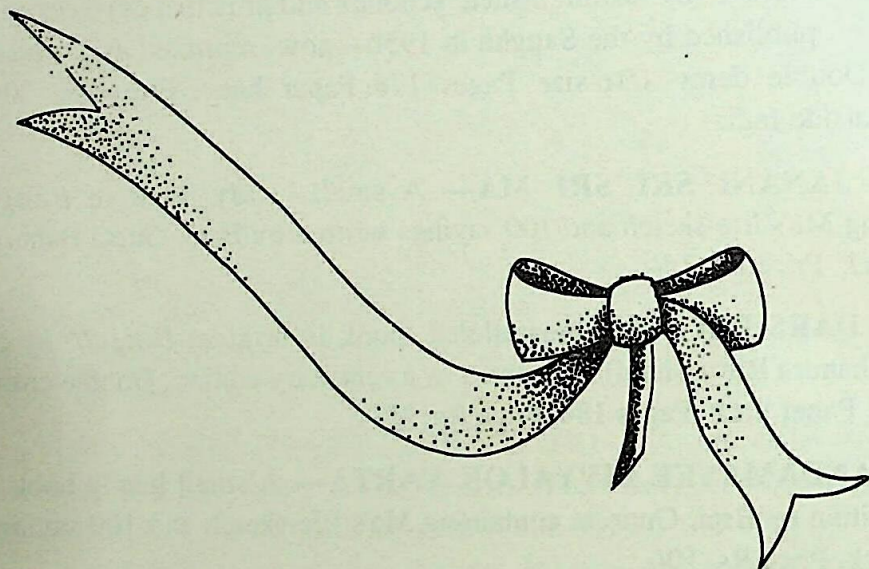
1. **PICTORIAL BIOGRAPHY OF MA ANANDAMAYEE**— A unique volume depicting Ma Anandamayee's entire life in words and pictures. Printed on high quality paper with numerous art plates. Rexin bound. Size 11"x9". Price Rs. 350/- for Bengali and Rs. 450/- for English editions or \$ 25.00 (Postage & packing extra).
2. **ANANDA JYOTI (CENTENARY SOUVENIR)**— A prestigious volume consisting of five different sections-Sanskrit, Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati & English, containing Ma's holy life chronicle (1896-1982), 100 choicest sayings of Ma, descriptive history of Ma's various Ashrams and institutions along with numerous art plates, reminiscences from the pens of many distinguished writers, special messages & tributes from eminent saints & V. V. I. P. s with a good number of rare photos of Ma.
Printed on special grade paper, more than 400 pages. Subsidised sale price in India Rs. 150/- for Paper back edn. and Rs. 200/- for Rexin bound. Price outside India \$ 20.00 (Paper back) or \$ 25.00 (Rexin bound). Postage and packing extra.
3. **IN YOUR HEART IS MY ABODE**— A handy book in *English* containing Ma's brief life-sketch and her hundred teachings written by Dr. Bithika Mukerji. Paper back. Price Rs. 20/- or \$ 2.00 outside India.
4. **MATRI VANI**—(Collection of Ma's invaluable sayings in English)— Reprinted by the Sangha. Handy size. Paper back. Price Rs. 20/- or \$ 2.00 outside India.

II

5. **WORDS OF SRI ANANDAMAYEE MA**— Precious talks of Sri Ma compiled and translated in English by Atmananda (Miss Blanca Schlamm). Published originally in 1961—reprinted as a centenary edition. Double crown 1/16 size. Paper back. Number of pages 240. Price Rs. 30/- or \$ 3.00 outside India.
6. **MOTHER AS SEEN BY HER DEVOTEES**— A collection of articles on Ma in *English* by distinguished scholars and principal devotees of Ma. Originally published by the Sangha in 1956—now reprinted as a centenary edition. Double demy 1/16 size. Pages 176. Paper back. Price Rs. 30/- or \$ 3.00 outside India.
7. **VISVA JANANI SRI SRI MA**— A small handy book in *Bengali* containing Ma's life-sketch and 100 sayings written by Brni. Geeta Banerjee. Paper back. Price Rs. 15/-.
8. **MATRI DARSHAN**— An unparalleled book in original *Bengali* by Sri Jyotish Chandra Roy (Bhaiji). Reprinted as a centenary edition. Double crown 1/16 size. Paper back. Pages 184. Price Rs. 25/-.
9. **MA ANANDAMAYEE DIVYALOK VARTA**— A small handy book in *Hindi* written by Brni. Guneeta containing Ma's life-sketch and 100 sayings. Paper back. Price Rs. 10/-.
10. **SAD VANI**— Translation in *Hindi* of Ma's precious sayings in Bengali compiled by Sri Jyotish Chandra Roy (Bhaiji). Reprinted as centenary edition. Handy volume. No. of pages 96. Price Rs. 10/-.
11. **MA ANANDAMAYEE**— Ma's biography in *Hindi* written by Dr. Panna Lall, I.C.S.(Rtd). Reprinted by the Sangha as centenary edition. Double crown 1/16 size. Paper back. Pages 200. Price Rs. 20/-.



With Best Compliments from



D. WREN GROUP OF COMPANIES :

*HEAD OFFICE : D. WREN INDUSTRIES (P) LTD.
25, SWALLOW LANE,
CALCUTTA-700 001*

*FACTORY AT : DUM DUM & BARODA.
BARODA CITY OFFICE —*

*D. WREN INTERNATIONAL LIMITED,
ALKAPURI, BARODA-390 007*

[contd. from previous cover page]

14. **NAIMISHARANYA :** Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram, Puran Mandir,
P.O. Naimisharanya, Sitapur-261 402 (U.P.)
15. **NEW DELHI :** Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
Kalkaji, New Delhi-110 019 (Tel : 6840365)
16. **PUNE :** Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
Ganesh Khind Road, Pune-411 007 (Maharashtra).
17. **PURI :** Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
Swargadwar, Puri-752 001 (Orissa)
18. **RAJGIR :** Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
P.O. Rajgir, Nalanda-803 116 (Bihar)
19. **RANCHI :** Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
Main Road, P.O. Ranchi-834 001 (Bihar)
20. **TARAPEETH :** Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
P.O. Chandipur-Tarapeeth,
Birbhum-731 233 (W.B.)
21. **UTTARKASHI :** Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
Kali Mandir, P.O. Uttarkashi-249 193 (U.P.)
22. **VARANASI :** Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
Bhadaini, Varanasi-221 001 (U.P.)
(Tel : 310 054+311794)
23. **VINDHYACHAL :** Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram, Ashtabhuja Hill,
P.O. Vindhyachal, Mirzapur-231 307 (U.P.)
24. **VRINDAVAN :** Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
P.O. Vrindavan, Mathura-281 121 (U.P.) Tel : 442024

IN BANGLADESH:

1. **DHAKA :** Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
14, Siddheshwari Lane, Dhaka-17 (Tel : 403766)
2. **KHEORA :** Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
P.O. Kheora, Via-Kasba, Brahmanbaria.

